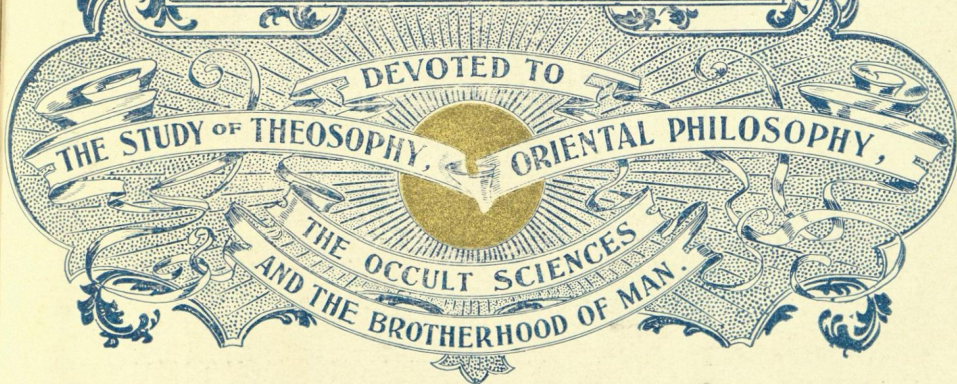


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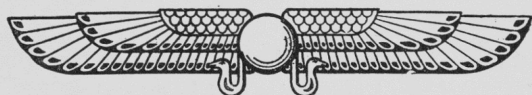
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MRS. ANNIE BESANT

"Point out the 'Way'—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

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VOL. V.

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THE SOUL AND ITS CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION.

ARISTOTLE declares that there is no knowledge so difficult to acquire as that of the soul. He claims that "the soul is the first principle by which we are enabled to see, to feel, to think; * * "it is the first act of an organized body possessing life in latency,"—definitions incompatible with the hypothesis of the immortality of the soul. Indeed, Aristotle combats the theory of the immortality of the soul; and in one of his works (*De Coelo*, lib. I, c. 12) he rejects the opinion of Solon regarding the state of happiness which awaits the virtuous man after death, as, according to him, there is nothing good or bad to be expected after death. He advanced the opinion that the soul is composed of a substance similar to that of the stars—a fifth element, a quintessence, more subtle than any of the four elements, but a material substance, nevertheless. We are here in presence of a purely materialistic doctrine regarding the nature of the human soul, a doctrine upon which modern materialism is founded.

To the philosophy of the great peripatetician, let us oppose the teachings of his master, Plato, the father of Idealism, the inspired author of "The Republic" and "The Banquet", the Initiator of the West. Plato recognizes in man a soul distinct from and pre-existent to the body. In his work "Phædon", he describes the soul as a spiritual essence, indivisible, immortal and like unto divinity. When

he considers man as the macrocosm—that is, as the man-universe, composed of the visible world, organic and inorganic—Plato attributes three souls to man: the vegetative soul or principle of the vegetable kingdom; the sensitive soul or principle of the animal kingdom; and the intellectual soul or principle of the hominal kingdom, which he considers immaterial and immortal.

We will complete this system with the principal teachings of the Stoics, to whom modern idealism is so greatly indebted for its doctrine relative to the soul. The followers of Zeno claim that there is but *one* soul, *one unique substance*, from which are issued the individual souls of men. The human soul is but a modification of the Cosmic Soul, analogous to a drop detached from an ocean. They teach that the Universal Soul is God Himself and that each soul is a portion of Divinity.

The early fathers of the Church adopted many of the ideas of the Stoics. Origen claims that the human soul existed before creation. This constitutes one of the fundamental dogmas of the mysticism of the Marquis of Saint Martin (see his "Erreurs et Verite"). Tertullian says that all the souls were, in the origin, but *one* soul, embodied in Adam (the Adam-Kadmon of the Kabbala). According to the writings of St. Augustine, Pelagius advanced the same theory. Galen (in Method, Medend., lib. 9, c. 10) affirms that each human soul is a portion of the general soul, that it comes from heaven and returns to its celestial origin. He admits the three souls of Plato, which he calls the nutritive soul, common with that of the vegetable kingdom; the sensitive soul, residing in the heart and common with the soul of the animal kingdom; and the reasonable soul, proper to man and residing in the brain. Averroes claims that after death the individual soul re-enters the Universal Soul from which it originated. In the middle ages, a monk wrote that mankind had but one soul, each individual possessing a small portion of the Universal Soul. Bishop Odon, of Beauvais, caused this doctrine to be publicly refuted and its author (?) persecuted. Later we hear Spinoza affirm that the soul of man is a small part of the Universal Soul; and this doctrine becomes that taught in secret by the Kabbalistic and Hermetic Doctors to their disciples of predilection. At present, the initiates of all great esoteric schools accept, with but few modifications, the theories of Plato and the Stoics in regard to the Cosmic Soul and the human soul; and nearly all modern centers of initiation, whether they follow Eastern

or Western tradition, consider the eventual return of the soul into the Divine Essence as the ultimate of its evolution.

But while the scientific world accepts in toto the doctrine of Darwin regarding the evolution of the material man, that of the soul or spiritual evolution is still contested, even by members of certain idealist schools, too much inclined, however, towards the criticism of of Kant, the dialectics of Hegel and the positivist empiricism of "modern" thinkers.

That the soul must evolve is proven by the undeniable fact that it has involved. Indeed, it is generally conceded that extremes meet; that the end identifies itself with the beginning, as the first point of a circumference unites with the last; that everything being *alpha* and *omega*, returns to its point of departure. Thus the human soul, if the result of the involution of the Universal Soul, must return to its original cosmic condition. We will endeavor to make clear this idea of involution, from which depends the value of what follows in regard to evolution, and at the same time convey a precise idea of what the ancient philosophers—Plato and Zeno principally—thought of the nature of the soul.

Physiology teaches that all tissues, vegetable and animal, have the *cell* for primordial unity. "The entire organism," says Goodsir, "is divided into parts containing a number of developed cells, all of which are in relationship with a central or capital cell around which they are grouped." Let us suppose an impossibility—let us suppose that we may discover such a central mother-cell before its development begins, and that we may place this isolated cell in such conditions that its multiplication may freely proceed. Soon segmentation takes place; cell after cell is added; a tissue—called intercellular tissue—is formed to unite the cells, as the cement is used to bind the bricks of a wall into one solid mass, and we discover that this aggregation of cells develops into a well-defined form; it grows in certain directions only, according to laws the nature of which totally escapes the naturalist, laws which, if several independent cells are placed in the same conditions favorable to their development, will cause each being to which these cells give birth to belong to the same typical form. In fine, after a certain time, all growth ceases—the individual is complete!

Now it may be asked: "What has presided at the formation of that first cell?" A force—not chemical, not physical, so far as we

know—a force absolutely unknown by physicists, the molecular force of Professor Huxley being inadmissible. It is, on the contrary, universally agreed upon that no *known* physical force is immediately responsible for the mysterious formation of so simple an organism as the cell. Man has never been able to catch nature in the act of creating a cell, and the “savant” is at a loss to find a power to which the generation of organic bodies can be reasonably attributed. But if this force escapes our observation, nevertheless it has been endowed with many names. The materialist calls it indifferently Vital Action, Etheric Principle, or simply Nature or hazard; the Theist calls it God; the physiologist gives it the name of *Vis Vitæ* or Inconscient; the Hindu philosopher, Prana (vitality); whilst the modern Idealist, as the Platonist and Stoic of antiquity, speaks of it as the Universal Soul, the cosmic force *par excellence*. But if this force, which presides at the generation of the initial cell or germ of being, *is* the soul of that being, it must be admitted that the soul cannot be the “effect”, but is rather the “cause” of that germ which has not yet developed. The soul is purely an idea, entirely subjective, and the body its objective expression; one is the immediate cause, the other the effect.

The result of our artificial development of cells is before us; it is a plant. And why is it a plant, and not an animal, a man, or simply an amorphous mass of cells? A disciple of Plato would answer, “Because the initial cell was formed under the action of the vegetative soul.” Had the cell been generated by the animal soul, the result of this growth would have been an animal; and had the intellectual soul been present at this creation, we would behold the creature man instead of the creature plant. Moreover, we observe not only that the being which has developed before us is a plant and not a man, but that it is a *certain* plant and not another. It is a lobelia and not an oak. And we are led logically to conclude that each genus, each species, each variety, must have its particular soul; or, to speak more correctly, that the *unique* vegetative soul is differentiated into genera and species and varieties; and that these divisions of the Universal Soul into the three great classes presented by Plato, along with the subdivisions of the vegetative, animal and hominal souls into orders, sub-orders, families, tribes, down to the individual soul, constitute the Cosmic Soul in process of objectivity, or *involution*. Involution is, then, the extension of the Universal

Essence (unique and simple, *but containing all the positive qualities of things*), from the subjective to the objective plane, thus causing diversity and producing multiplicity by the mixture of opposites, by contrast. In short, involution is the descent of the Idea into the dominion of forms; and the Idea being universal, form assumes innumerable aspects. Evolution is the opposite of involution; it is the return of perceptible things into the intelligible world; the bringing back to primordial unity of the multiplicity arising from the contraries, which, being relative only to material objects, or to the human mind, are *co-existent* in the unity of the First Principle (Foulee).

What has been said above in regard to the creative power of the soul, of the power of endowing matter with a form appropriate to the being's material wants, may give rise to some objections from students of Theosophy who are accustomed to consider the seven principles of man as separate envelopes for the purer essence which constitutes the "Ego", envelopes which it abandons as it advances spiritually. Thus the objection may be raised that the formation of the body is not attributable to the spiritual soul, but to a fluidic, semi-material (?) part of our being which has been borrowed by the higher principles of the soul from the inert matter to which it properly belongs. Other schools call this principle Astral Body; it is the "Vital Being" of Grew (*Treatise of the Vital World*); or what Cudworth and Hartsoeker, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, called the "Plastic Soul", which they described as a spiritual substance uniquely destined to the organization of the body, whether animal or plant. Long before then, Paracelsus and Guillaume Postel referred to the "Plastic Mediator" as the formator of the body. It is the *Linga Sharira* of the Hindus, who generally suppose it distinct and independent from the higher principles of the soul. It being the medium between the spirit and the body, semi-material, semi-spiritual (which is absurd), the Astral Body is often believed to be of a substance different from that of the soul. This conception of the soul in layers of a matter more and more subtle, is so far from being universally accepted among students of occult science, that we will be permitted to consider the different principles entering into the constitution of the soul simply as attributes of *one indivisible essence*. Alfred Foulee, interpreting the language of Plato, says: "Real division can apply only to expanded substance, and the soul

cannot be divided physically in several parts of a nature different from the whole and susceptible of a separate existence. Each soul is thus invisible in this respect." It is true that, for the sake of expressing oneself with greater ease, one is accustomed to speak of the different attributes of the soul as separate entities; properly speaking, however, the Plastic Mediator in this incarnation *is* the soul, but considered exclusively as to its immediate rapports with the body. It is designated in physiology under the appellation of "Inconscient", to which are assigned the vital functions of the organism, such as the circulation of the blood, the assimilation of the aliments, the obscure mechanism of reflex action, the mysterious work of cicatrization, etc. It is believed that the "Inconscient" acts freely, regardless of the higher faculties of the soul, such as reason, volition. But in truth the Inconscient responds to impulses emanating directly from these higher principles of the human soul, as is demonstrated in the practice of the art of healing. That the work of the Inconscient is involuntary, automatic, cannot to a great extent be denied; nevertheless it is susceptible of being directed in its work by the "mens", or intelligence. It is upon this principle that the theory and practice of psychopathy are based. Hypnotherapy, mental healing, Christian science, faith-cure, etc., depend upon the awakening of the activity of the spiritual principle of the soul, in order that it may discover the fact that the power of reason, and above all of volition, may and will effectively direct the *vis vita* in its restorative work, or rather call into action all the faculties of the soul in its relationship to the physical body. Mental therapeutics teaches (or ought to teach), how the conscient part of the soul—reason and will—can direct the the inconscient plastic mediator in the rebuilding of affected tissues, in the elimination of morbid elements from the economy, etc.; it teaches (or ought to teach) the patient what to do in order to give to the astral body a fresh and salutary impulse whenever needed, so that the air we breathe, the food we assimilate, the influences we receive from external sources may be transmuted into elements of vitality, both physically and intellectually. In fine, just as the Ego was instrumental in directing the initial manifestation of the inconscient in the generation of the first cell and the elaboration of the definite form of the individual, so does it remain instrumental in directing, through the entire course of life, the plastic mediator in the grand work of preserving the organism in the blessed harmony of

health which brings joy and riches, provided it is supported by reason and called into activity by the ever potent desire (Kama).

Before leaving the subject of that which plays such a great role in the evolution of the spiritual as well as the physical man, it seems desirable to explain why, whilst accepting the doctrine of the Kabbalists in regard to the "disintegration" of the astral body after death, we consider the plastic mediator not as an independent part of the soul (it cannot too often be repeated), but as the soul itself, considered exclusively in its immediate rapports with the body. Properly speaking, there cannot be any disintegration of any part of that soul, as the word disintegration carries with itself an idea of mortality incompatible with the immortality of a spiritual principle such as the soul. The idea of disintegration rests upon a misunderstanding. The attribute of the soul which causes it to act as an intermediary between the pure spiritual essence and the material body must naturally cease to manifest itself with the destruction of the body. The word mediator implies the existence of two extremes; if one of these extremes ceases to exist, the presence of an intermediate term becomes impossible. Therefore the soul of the disincarnate can no more present that "condition relative to the body" which we call plastic mediator, astral body, ether, prana, vitality, etc. It is true that this principle belongs to the Cosmic Soul, of which the human soul is but a portion, a differentiated expression; but it remains with the individual soul; it remains his "effective volitive faculty" (the faculty of producing an effect by the will), which becomes instrumental in reincarnation. The faculty of the soul to bring together material elements for the elaboration of the physical body is not lost; and indeed, should the soul elect to reincarnate, the plastic mediator (that first manifestation of the spiritual principle upon the objective plane) immediately enters into action, the astral body is at once recalled to existence—which proves that this principle is inherent in the soul, that it is not separate from the spirit and does not disintegrate, according to the ordinary meaning of the word.

We will now study the evolution of the soul—evolution which can only take place during incarnation, through the instrumentality of our physical senses and the exercise of our moral faculties. If volition has the power even to direct the vital energies (and hypnotism as well as medicine proves it sufficiently, without taking into

consideration the stories of travelers in India, who speak of fakirs who have the faculty of suspending and resuming at will the functions of their physical organs), volition must possess an equal power upon the more noble parts of our being; and as it may be used to procure to our body health and comfort, it may, *a fortiori*, become instrumental in bringing to our spiritual self salvation and eternal peace.

As was said above, the ultimate end of the evolution of the soul is its eventual return into the Divine Essence from which it emanated. This has caused the general belief that by its absorption into the great Cosmic Soul, the human soul loses its personality, such absorption being equivalent to annihilation. The beautiful dogma of Nirvana meets with the same objection from persons unacquainted with the esoteric tradition. However, Nirvana means nothing less than the return of the spirit into the very Source of its life! (Chaboseau).

The Divine Essence is by its very nature Incognizable. Placed without the realms of time and space, above the region of form, it escapes human comprehension. Of all qualities imagined by man, we can find only one which we can attribute to that Divine Essence—it is that of perfection. And who says perfection, means supreme goodness, since goodness, since perfection can only be said of positive qualities, such as the good, the true, the beautiful, and not negative “qualities” (?) such as evil, deception and ugliness, which have no existence proper. The Primordial Unity is perfection and perfection must necessarily mean absolute goodness, for, says Plato, “Goodness is the source of all existence.” And if by the word personality we understand “that which is proper and particular to a being and different from any other being,” goodness will then constitute the real, the ideal, the unique personality; for, to quote again the divine Plato, our master, “every quality, every essence, elevated to the highest degree of purity, of perfection, of unity, being thus determined, cannot be confounded with any other thing.” It is thus absolutely personal, for it is absolutely *distinct* from any conceivable thing, and distinction is the essential characteristic of personality. Perfection simple, without admixture, without interior contradiction, such is the personality of the Divine Essence, a personality not only perfect in one respect and less perfect in another, but perfect from all points of view, save, of course, that of evil,

which is an imperfection. The Ideal Personality is thus Absolute Goodness and *vice-versa*.

We are taught in a certain school that the mission of man while on earth consists in the auto-creation of his personality. All the precepts inculcated have in view the guiding of the student in the accomplishment of that task. In that school, man is taught the art (which is called the great art), of becoming personal. But personality must not be misunderstood as originality! Originality is a negative quality (?); originality affects the exterior man only; an original character is conspicuous, the personal man remains unknown. The personality which the neophyte is instructed to create is that modelled upon ideal perfection. The creation of the personality is far from being the work of a man ambitious for public recognition. It is, on the contrary, the slow and patient work of the moral transmutation of passive qualities, incompatible with the nature of the Divine Essence; in other words, the conversion of our passions into positive qualities, commonly called virtues. By the auto-creation of the personality is meant precisely that which is the object of your researches—the conscious evolution of the soul!

Every work of art—and by art we mean the manifestation of the creative power of man—is preceded by a mental or subjective operation, which we call the creation of an ideal. It is the reconstitution, if you wish, of the archetypal form in the mind; the elaboration of a perfect model. (For those interested in Hermetic sciences, we will say that the essence of which the ideal is made is that mysterious “Prima Materia” of the alchemists; that substance so universally scattered that everyone can find it, that can be purchased for so little, etc.) The creation of an ideal constitutes the preparatory step towards the realization of a work of art. The poet, the artist, the mystic, the altruist, the sociologist, the moralist—in fine, all those who create forms, who shape the human intellect or the human heart—have an ideal, representing in their own minds the supreme type of perfection, whether it be perfection in the use of language, perfection in the harmony of colors or sounds, or perfection regarding social institutions, ethical or simply administrative, etc. The ideal is the aim of life, the aim of all creations, and of all human aspirations. Artists, whom the world sometimes calls utopists, and whom Max Nordau classifies in the category of degenerates (!), seek to elevate to the highest degree of purity—in other words

seek to deify—language, color, sound, sentiments, and even physical sensations and passions; they endeavor to raise them up to the level of a model, which has appeared to them while under the influence of that illumination which poets and artists have so appropriately named inspiration. Indeed, inspiration is derived from the highest and purest source, from the Ideal of ideals. It is the ecstatic vision of the initiate into that unknown region where dwells perfection personified. The poet is a clairvoyant and *illuminatus*; his ideal is the reflection into his own soul of the ideal type of beauty: the manifestation of the Divine Essence in man. Thus, when the initiate of the school referred to above sets about to create his personality, he isolates himself in silent meditation and contemplation, as the artist when absorbed in the conception of his work. He creates his ideal—ideal approaching Primordial Goodness so much the nearer as the artistic, intellectual, or moral development of the initiate will have been carried to a greater extent. All the ideals are thus the reflections, more or less true, of the unique and typical ideal, perfection! The more the scholar is advanced, the more his conception of the good, the true, the beautiful will approach reality; until, by a supreme effort of the evolving soul, the ideal reaches the highest degree of purity, becoming at one with the Divine Essence; and “as every essence elevated to its highest degree of purity, of perfection, of unity, cannot be confounded with any other thing”, we may logically conclude that the soul of the initiate, “which has been so elevated to its highest degree of purity, of perfection, of unity,” must become absorbed into the Supreme Soul from which it has ceased to differ. Moreover, as two things equal to a third are equal to each other, so all souls whose personalities have attained the ideal of perfection are equal to each other and vibrate in unison. This is very forcibly symbolized in a certain order of luminaries, which, although separate from each other, nevertheless give but one light. When several violins have regulated the tension of their A string from the tone of a tuning fork, all instruments vibrate in absolute unison with the typical A of the tuning-fork; it becomes impossible to distinguish one instrument from the other when playing that sound simultaneously; the violins and the tuning-fork give but one sound, they become but *one* instrument; even characteristic qualities of musical sounds, like “timbre”, are lost in a perfect homogeneity, as may be heard in an orchestra sounding the key-note A, although the or-

chestra is composed of at least twelve different kinds of instruments whose qualities of tone essentially differ from each other. Only one sound is heard, one unique timbre, thus creating but one impression upon the mind. And such is Nirvana, the Universal Unison. *This* is what is meant by the word "absorption," in regard to the *identification* of the human soul with that of the universe, when man will have re-integrated the very source of life eternal from whence he came. Thus there is but one real personality, and it is the destiny of man to progress spiritually until this highest type of personality is attained; then, far from having lost his own individuality and having ceased to be his own self, he will have extended his individuality from the special to the general, from the dominion of forms to the incommensurable region of essences, from the isolation of a sub-multiple to the universality of the All-Pervading-Unity. It is the re-integration of the soul into that mystic center to which the Marquis de Saint Martin refers in his allegory of the "Fall of Man."

In *resume*, if involution is the descent of Unity into the dominion of multiplicity, evolution is the ascent from the region of opposites, or contrasts, towards the Synthetic Unity. Evolution is the consequence of the harmony resulting from the analogy of contraries, and it is accomplished by means of the ideal, that equilibrating term between opposites, that common foundation of the two pillars of the Temple. The Cosmic Soul, through involution, has descended to the individual soul. The individual soul now, by evolution, re-integrates Primordial Unity, augmenting the intensity of the Supreme Vibration; and thus the cycle is completed. This is the esoteric signification of the seal of Solomon surrounded by a circle.

But the uninitiated, far from endeavoring to shape his personality according to the Divine Model, nurses only those faculties which are immediately profitable to himself and which can procure that material comfort for which he aspires as the ultimate good to be derived from earthly existence. The soul of such a man returns into the species of the hominal soul to which he belongs; he is absorbed in the principle of which he was the form here below, to await another opportunity to manifest his being by a new act of his efficient volitive faculty. He carries with himself into the human soul the imperfections to which he has become enslaved while on earth, and the soul of the race or nation is contaminated; so that the entire species suffers from the faults of a single individual, in the same

manner that the entire human organism is affected by the disease of only a small and often unimportant part of the body, even a single cell. The species is solidary of the faults of the individual, as the individual suffers from the general debilitated condition of the species to which he belongs, and inherits at birth the virtues and vices characteristic of his contemporaneity. Thus a man who sins against himself commits a crime against humanity; as society at large is, in its turn, greatly responsible for many individual crimes. The contrary also is true: the virtues of the individual profit the community; the intellectual soul, the soul of Adam-Kadmon, also evolves slowly and progressively; and this is why each and every generation has its characteristic traits; this is why men of a certain epoch have numerous points of resemblance and all share more or less equally the moral and intellectual conditions of the multitude. These conditions constitute that which has been called *l'esprit du siecle* (the spirit of the century). Men do not think today as they did three thousand, or three hundred, or even thirty years ago; the general ideas change, mostly for the better; it is the soul of the human kind (the intellectual soul of Plato), which slowly evolves, through the progress accomplished by the individual during the short period of his earthly existence. The soul of the century trusts to the individual soul certain concepts which it will develop or permit to atrophy, correct or pervert, ennoble or disfigure, so that, when its spark of life shall return to the central "foyer", it shall carry with itself more or less than it has received, according to whether life will have been a success or a failure, morally and intellectually speaking.

But when we consider that the progress of the hominal soul is dependent upon the progress of the individual soul, reason as well as tradition informs us that the evolution of the individual is not subordinate to that of the race to which it belongs, and that the emancipation of that soul from the bonds of materiality is always possible to the man of desire, by the auto-creation of his personality; that is to say, by placing himself consciously in unison with the ideal of perfection, by entering into the Divine Essence through the mystic communion with God, from Whom he emanates.

The "Unknown Philosopher" has said that "the place from whence man came is disposed with such wisdom that, in retracing his steps and following the same path that has led him astray, man

is sure to return to that place from whence he came, re-invested of what he has been divested, and placed again upon the central point where alone he is able to possess some power and enjoy some rest."

The prevarication of Adam Kadmon, the Grand Man, is no less than the expansion of Unity into multiplicity—cause of all contrasts, of all antinomies, infallible mark of imperfection. It is the unfoldment of the abstract into the concrete, of the idea into the form; the manifestation of the Universal Being. The road of transgression is indicated by the differentiation of the cosmic force into the three souls of Plato, as we have seen in the paragraph referring to involution. Each of these three great divisions, or principles, is divided and subdivided.

The *intellectual soul* (the only one which needs our attention in this paper) presents the following classification: (1) The soul of the human kind, or Adam Kadmon; (2) the soul of the race; (3) the soul of the nation; (4) the soul of the family; (5) the soul of the individual.

The path to reintegration is easy to reconstitute, since it has been pointed out to us that "man is sure to return to the place from whence he came only in retracing his steps." This means no less than the destruction of the individuality for the collectivity, of space for the Infinite, of time for Eternity, of the relative for the Absolute. And this work of restitution begins with the sacrifice of self for the family, of the family for the nation, of the nation for the race, and of the race for humanity. It means the annihilation of the passions; that is, of all the passive qualities of our material nature, and of the original imperfections which we owe to the general soul and those we have inherited by our separation from the Unique Center of Life, from the Supreme Atom. It means the sacrifice of the moral individuality for the extension of the general liberty; it means the sacrifice of the spirit of the familiar circle that the great family of nations might be formed (Fabre d'Olivet). It means a continual immolation, a perpetual crucifixion of all sentiments relating to self for the sake of the hominal collectivity; the sacrifice of the part in order to preserve the integrity of the whole; it means the absolute at-one-ment without which salvation or reintegration is utterly impossible, and this is why the Rosicrucians and their successors say: "*In Cruce Salus!*"

Egotism, that prevalent vice of our generation, is the moral symp-

tom of our situation at a very low step of the ladder of spiritual progress. No evolution can possibly begin while we persist in considering our personal welfare as the principal aim of our existence. Here all the schools positively agree; it is the sole point in which there is *not one* diverging opinion: *evolution begins with the crucifixion of one's sensual nature.* While by our intellectual achievements, our talents and our mental activity, we contribute vigorously to the development of our race, individual progress, self-emancipation from the bonds of materiality are only possible by the practice of purest altruism! For the love of self the Initiate substitutes love for man. Man, whatever may be his color, his nationality, his beliefs, his social situation, is the exclusive object of the altruist's solicitude; and it is for man that he renews the sublime sacrifice of the Son of God, who said, "My Father is your Father", that we may know that by a similar love for mankind—a love that will not stop even before Calvary—one may also be called a "Son of God." But such a love must not end in simple intentions, or public declarations. It goes further than delivering eloquent addresses upon the topic of universal brotherhood! Altruism manifests itself by *acts*, and such acts as the God-Man has shown us; acts from which no fee or reward is to be expected, and which do not attract the attention of our fellow men; so we may escape the danger of praise, which brings pride to our souls and pollutes the purity of our intentions; which may give rise to envy in other people and subject them to a loss of the benefit of their own good actions. Praise excites emulation, a sentiment which drags behind itself a long chain of sins in word and thought, the least of which may suffice to arrest the evolution of our soul. The altruist, the true Adept, is unknown and remains unknown, at least by his generation; he performs his good deeds in silence and darkness, under the protective mask of the anonymous! The men most universally known as wise by their contemporaries, are by no means the true Masters who shape the general character of a race; they are merely their docile instruments.

The practice of altruism is thus the only road for the conscious evolution of the soul. Altruism is within the power of every man, whether he be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, young or old, influential or obscure. There are seventy occasions in a day to perform some real act of love for mankind, so that evolution is possible to every soul eager to find the true path which leads to eternal

life! The Master of Masters Himself, in the tenderness of His divine Heart, has He not pointed out the way to His brothers in the flesh when He said:

“Do unto another what you would he should do unto you, and do not unto another what you would not should be done unto you. *Thou needest this law alone. It is the foundation and principle of all the rest.*”

In all truth, the golden rule is the beacon-light which guides the man of desire through the painful process of the freeing of the soul from material bonds, or that which we have called the conscious evolution of the soul.

DR. EDOUARD BLITZ.

THE VALUE OF APPEARANCES.

MOST of us have had impressed upon us, from our early youth, the statement that appearances are deceitful; that we should not judge a man or event or thing by that which is presented to us as the outside aspect. Shakespeare, our great instructor in human nature, gives the same lesson. He speaks of a person as resembling a goodly apple rotten at the core, and exclaims, “Oh, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!” and again, “the toad, ugly and venomous, hath yet a precious jewel in his head.”

But modern impertinence can venture to argue an assertion, even though made by a Shakespeare. Falsehood has not always “a goodly outside.” A pleasant-looking apple is only seldom “rotten at the core.” And I dare to assert that there are some toads that have not the good fortune to possess a jewel in their heads; and that even a very beautiful creature may be gifted in like manner as this very fortunate reptile. Precious jewels *may* be found in beautiful caskets; and it is within the realms of possibility to find rottenness within that which is outwardly repulsive.

We are just as liable to fall into error if we consider a person's merit to be in inverse ratio to his or her attractiveness of manner or person, as we are, if, without discrimination, we regard a charming personality as *necessarily* showing a beautiful and trustworthy nature; in fact, I believe, more so. We have passed the age when perfection of form and coloring was considered the chief beauty, and

have arrived at appreciation of the true beauty of expression, which is the real nature showing through the form—perhaps shining the more clearly to our view when our eyes are not first caught by the more obvious beauty of color and proportion. The beauty of expression is not limited to the actual body, but shows itself in dress, manner, movements—in many subtle ways.

We have advanced from appreciation of beauty in color and form chiefly, to that of expression, the soul shining through the form; and clairvoyants tell us that this beauty of the true nature is more clearly and accurately seen in the aura that surrounds each person than in the person itself, with its manners, movements, etc.; love, truth, purity and selflessness being evident in the most lovely light and color; evil qualities showing themselves in murky, unpleasant tints. This, it is said, is to be our next advance.

But these are all appearances. There are not yet many among us evolved to the point of attaining this faculty of vision, but we are all advancing towards it. It is the sixth sense, belonging to the fourth dimension of matter, and the greater number of us are still confined to the third dimension. It seems similar, in some respects, to what may be called the vision of the Roentgen rays, to which the body presents no obstacle, for they can penetrate through it. Clairvoyant vision is able to penetrate through matter. To anyone who can see the aura of a person, that, it is said, seems the most striking feature, while the physical body is quite unimportant.

I have heard it said, and seen it written, that we should not criticize, and criticism should perhaps be silent; but, if it be not harsh, or unkindly, it is a help to the understanding of human nature and an exercise of the faculty of discrimination, which will enable us ultimately to arrive at the truth. And we can no longer criticize others unkindly, when we have once, with unprejudiced vision, looked *within*, and realized the possibilities that lie in ourselves.

When people resolve to take up the "higher life", they frequently begin by neglecting all that pertains to mundane existence, their personal appearance among other matters, and present an unkempt and unpleasant aspect that is distinctly repellant to those not quite so much in earnest, who might, if not so repelled, be led a few steps along the path. Some people seem possessed by the strange idea that ugliness, slovenliness and awkwardness are the outward signs of intellect and virtue, and that others who pay due regard to the

adornment of themselves and their households are not sincere lovers of the good. In a recently acted society comedy, a remark was made by one of the characters to the effect that a necessary preliminary to leading a good life was to go to a bad dressmaker. The satire was appreciated. It is a pity that virtue and dowdiness should be regarded as synonymous terms, and we cannot deny that there is great reason for the prevalent impression.

The underlying idea, of course, is good, it being, I suppose, the endeavor to overcome personal vanity and to rule the body. But austerities, exaggerated, defeat their end. For instance, the body, ill treated, made uncomfortable, causes one's attention to be directed to it, whilst if at ease (without luxury) it can be ignored, and one's attention can readily be turned to superior matters.

The desire to see good in that which is outwardly repulsive is a beautiful human characteristic, but I do not believe that anything can be repulsive through which good looks out, and I protest against the idea that there is rottenness within the beautiful, which is the good and true. If there is evil within, it will show itself in ugliness of some kind, in spite of any material perfection of form and color. The true nature *is* depicted in the form and face of a person, not always perhaps in youth, but in maturity, when repeated thought in one direction has caused the muscles to set correspondingly. To the careful observer, there can be no deception by an assumed benevolence or morality; the true nature will show in some line, or in a glance or movement when the hypocrite is off guard.

Customs and creeds—appearances again—that were true and fitted for their time, have to be amended or thrown off as we progress. Else, where does development come in? If the clothing suited to a child be worn by a man, he becomes a rather ludicrous object!

The further we develop, the more clearly we shall discern the true nature of things, and we can only advance by a resolute practice of and search for truth, which is beauty. We are so limited in our present low condition of development, that we have to recognize that our view of things, however true to us, and however impartial we may try to be, can be but a feeble approximation to the truth as it is. We see from the outside instead of from within the center. However, we are advancing, though we may have to pass through very many incarnations before arriving at perfection of judgment. It seems that until we arrive at union with the Universal Life, our

judgment can only be true as regards time, not as regards eternity.

Thus it appears, that while, since we must use our judgment and reason, we value things from the appearances they present to us, it should always be with the idea in mind that we see with but a limited vision, following *in a measure* Pyrrho's advice as to suspension of judgment.

Evil and death are appearances. The apparent separation of humanity into isolated individuals is in appearance only. Emerson says: "There is no man; what is all this self-action but so much death? * * * The heart in thee is the heart in all; not a valve, not a wall, not an intersection anywhere in nature; but one blood rolls uninterruptedly in an endless circulation through all men, as the water of the globe is all one sea, and truly seen its tide is one."

I will conclude by adding to any previous impertinence in arguing an assertion of Shakespeare's, a denial of the truth of a saying attributed to Solomon, and say that favor is not deceitful, and beauty is not vain. To believe that it is and to act up to one's belief is to crush out an element in human nature that might, if it received its due meed of attention, help to advance us into the true. The latter part of Solomon's assertion, "a woman who feareth the Lord deserveth to be praised," cannot be taken exception to in itself, but I protest against the obvious intention to point out that beauty and favor are incompatible with the "fear of the Lord." *They are not.* To believe that they are is to degrade life, and to injure our human-divine nature. I believe we are right in judging by appearances, for we must and always shall; but we have to train ourselves to judge truly, and not to allow our vision to be colored by our personality, nor reflect on others the qualities in ourselves.

We live in the midst of appearances. All the manifested world is an appearance, the garment of the Deity, and a garment in which there is no ugliness except that made by man. As we advance, truer vision will still show us appearances until we reach the formless pure Divinity.

M. LOWTHIME.

EDITORIAL.

A PARTING WORD.

THE WATCHWORD of the T. S. is *growth*—growth through evolving forms—a process which necessitates change after change, continuous disintegration making possible fairer reintegration. Without death there could be no life; old forms must pass away to give birth to new. This truth is fundamental in Theosophy; it is the key-note of the law of rebirth, and is universal in its application.

Therefore the readers and friends of this magazine will be neither chagrined nor surprised to receive this month a word of farewell. MERCURY'S work is done. The phenomenal growth of the Section, its increasing solidarity and activity, demand a different order of things. As a form MERCURY dies, but its spirit, its energy, its life, pass into other forms, more in accord with present needs.

Henceforth, every member of the American Section will receive each month *The Theosophic Messenger*, whose columns will contain methods of study, plans for the conduct of Branch and public meetings, suggestions for class-work, news of Branch activities, etc., as well as answers to vital questions. By kind permission, many of these answers will be reprinted from the *Vahan* (the English sectional monthly), thus giving to every American F. T. S. the advantage of direct teaching from the leaders of Theosophic thought. This paper will be the official organ of the American Section, and will be issued by Mercury Publishing Office at San Francisco, in accordance with the resolution passed by the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Section.

Another form arising from the ashes of MERCURY will be a children's magazine. As many of our readers will remember, it was for the children's cause that MERCURY first appeared in form, and a very simple form it was. This, too, passed away, but its life now reincarnates in *The Golden Chain*, with the enthusiastic approval of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater. This juvenile magazine will be conducted on very broad lines, so as to make it acceptable to all classes. The annual subscription will be fifty cents a year, and it is hoped that the present readers of MERCURY will subscribe for at least two copies and thereby do their part in helping the children's cause.

Contributions to the columns of *The Golden Chain* are invited from those interested in this branch of Theosophic work. Stories suitable for children, adaptations of myths, studies from nature simply put, will be gladly welcomed. It is hoped that songs suitable for use in Lotus Circles and children's classes may be published from time to time, and our musical friends are invited to help in this direction. A special feature will be the illustrations, which will open up a field of usefulness for those fortunate ones who are skilled in the use of the pencil.

In conclusion, the editors of MERCURY thank their friends and contributors for many favors of the past, and beg them to extend their interest and enthusiasm to *The Theosophical Review*, which will hereafter be the representative Theosophical magazine for America as well as for England.

THE THEOSOPHICAL REVIEW.

AT THE request of some leading members of the American Section of the Theosophical Society, I have consented to issue an American edition of the *Theosophical Review* simultaneously with the English. MERCURY merges in the American *Theosophical Review*, the first number of which will appear on September 15th. It will be published in Chicago, and all orders, subscriptions, etc., can be sent to the Theosophical Book Concern, 26 Van Buren Street, where also all information can be obtained by addressing Mr. Robert Burnett, who has kindly consented to act as Chairman of the Business Committee.

It is hoped that the issue of this American edition will be of service in presenting the Theosophical movement in a dignified and attractive way to the intelligent public of America, and that it will also draw American and English Theosophists more closely together. My co-editor, Mr. G. R. S. Mead, cordially concurs in this hope, and will strive with me to realize it.

Mr. W. J. Walters, who has conducted MERCURY with so much devotion and self-sacrifice, has agreed to merge it in the *Review* as his contribution to the realization of this same hope, and will do all in his power to ensure the success of the new departure. We all join in the appeal to American Theosophists to lend us their aid, which can alone crown the venture with prosperity.

ANNIE BESANT.

PRAYER.

"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of."

ONE of the important duties of the Theosophist of to-day is to strive to ennoble the ideals of the people, by presenting to them fundamental truths as to the nature and destiny of man. No purpose can be nobler, more godlike, than this. Jesus, in the olden time, and great men before and since, including our own Emerson, have sought to raise and enrich the minds of their fellow men along idealistic lines. The fundamental truth they have had to impart is that the least among men is as great as the Teacher. The most serious mistake men have made has been that of relying upon a Teacher rather than on themselves—a most deplorable error, resulting in loss of the dignity of manhood and in the degradation of the divine ideal; for man, designed in the image of God, contains within himself all the potentialities which make for godhood, the materials which he himself must use and shape in the "building of the temple." For, "Know ye not that ye are gods?"

Oh, for the day when the least among men shall hold that Ideal of Light for himself; when men will worship and pray in secret to the god in the temple, retiring into the holy sanctuary, seeking holiness and wisdom, desiring naught but the will of the Father!

There can be but one purpose in prayer—the unification of man with the Divinity; or, in other words, to raise the vibratory rate of the human nature to attunement with the divine. Everything in the life must tend to that eternal truth, the realization of the god within; slowly, it may be, and with due discrimination, but the ideal always in view, like a pillar of light illumining the pathway.

The first steps in prayer tend to neutralize and to purify the discordant elements in the nature, brought about by wrong thinking and consequent wrong habits. It is the beginning of the refining process, the first effort in the science of alchemy—the transmutation of the baser metals into gold. Jesus and the other great world Teachers have given valuable advice concerning this stage of purification. "Verily, I say unto you, ye must become as a little child

before ye can enter into the kingdom of heaven." "The pupil must regain the child-state he has lost, ere the first sound can fall upon the ear."

Review the past life; contrast it with the original innocence of the child; and in proportion as one has wandered, with the blindness of the lower vision, from the original state, so will the preliminary task be light or burdensome. We must confess, however, that to the average man it is a herculean undertaking, meaning, as it does, the complete withdrawal of the consciousness from the sense centers. Not only is continence enjoined, but also that exquisite and natural child-balance of the mind which attaches no importance, other than a natural one, to any sense center in the organism. But everything is possible by means of prayer and a courageous faith in the ultimate realization of the ideal. Here, as elsewhere, in nature's processes, justice reigns supreme, the ever-flowing cause and effect—"God's chancellors", as Emerson aptly calls them—ceaselessly adjusting the old with the new, at every aspiration slipping in a golden link to safely replace that which was forged too hurriedly before.

Examined in a higher light, prayer is a beautiful force tinted with hues of love. Every holy aspiration whether for the individual or for the universal good, is prayer. The mother's wish for her child, the sister's hope for her brother, are prayer—and the ideal prayer, because lacking the taint of self. The life of Jesus was a life of prayer, a life of love embracing a humanity.

Something general may be said as to practice, and it is well to remember those beautiful words, so full of sweet meaning to the Christian: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I (the Christ Light) be in the midst of them." Make the soul a living reality in the life—not *my* soul only, but *thy* soul. "Treat men as though they were real." "Insist on yourself", in all gentleness, however. A man may have humility and gentleness and still retain greatness, for tenderness is the handmaid of true greatness. God is not seen, but he makes himself felt. Self-reliance, used for the general good of society, is the main-spring of evolution. Self-reliance, used for self alone, is Satan's handicap. The natural law—God's law—is to receive and give; the reversal of that is to receive and not give. Truly, "Satan is God reversed!" An uneasy, instinctive sensing of this great compensative law forces worldly people, at times, to build a chapel or tender a donation to some chari-

table institution. "God is not mocked." The soul will speak at last, and in no uncertain tones. We may grow arrogant and lose respect for our fellows, but lo! some calamity befalls us. This is the voice of the Great Adjuster saying, "Learn thou the lesson of sympathy, and learn it well! Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith."

Thrice happy is the man who communes with the soul, fearing no man, but fearing only the Law—for the Lord and the Law are one. Our thoughts shall bridge the gulf between the human and the divine, ever striving toward the beautiful and true, and laying up no uncertain "treasures in heaven." Rich indeed is he who has builded pure ideals. Verily, there are princes who walk the earth in rags. "Not in the possession of the things without, but in the perfection of the soul within, lies the empire of the men desiring to be more than man." "Attain ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." The world is full of shams. That the rich die beggars, and the poor die rich is not a perplexing paradox to the thoughtful.

The second step is consecration—the consecration of the thought, of the life, to God, to the Eternal. This constitutes true piety, true wisdom. We come from God—"In Him we live and move and have our being"—and to Him we shall return. Man walks with God—in a willing bondage of Love. And then there springs up in the heart that sympathy, rich and warm, flowing from man to man, excluding none, forsaking none, because the bond of brotherhood is real; all are children of one Father-Spirit, sons of one sweet Mother Nature! Such sympathy is not to be suppressed; rather should Love, God-Love, the ruling and guiding power, be allowed to expand and grow. The world is in need of more Davids, singing to the Lord with "ten-stringed instruments." When this stage is reached, we have made the soul real, a mighty factor in the life; we have made the thoughts—messengers of the soul—potent harbingers of the beautiful and the true, linking us to the ideal, which is indeed the real; we have "glorified the Father." All this is necessary to a life of prayer. But we need the fire, the spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth," said Jesus. We are weary of shams; we will feed no more on husks, on forms and ceremonies. The life, the spirit eternal, is ours. We have but to seek to find; but to ask to receive; but to knock and enter. But he who worships must

“worship in spirit and in truth.” “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul into vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

And then follows the transmutation—the conversion. But the true conversion comes in natural sequence—not amid frenzied intoxication, but in the holy silence, and according to law. Slowly and painfully the refining processes proceed in the laboratories of the temple. The old garments, the clay of earth, cling tenaciously. All too willingly we have put them on, and only with effort can they be cast off. But the soul forever beckons, “Up and onward forevermore.”

So at last we win the prize—the child-state, where the pure in heart see God. That state, and none other, has made possible a Tennyson, a Wordsworth, capable of ascending to the higher levels of being, and holding communion with the soul itself. “To him that overcometh shall be given the crown of life, and he shall go no more out.”

NATURE'S LAWS, MANIFESTED AND CONCEALED.

THE LIMITS of the manifested laws of nature are not to be fixed by one man for another; they are sufficiently elastic to accommodate each man's degree of development. The question with each of us is, To what extent have the possibilities of nature unfolded themselves to us? Some of us remain all our lives as children regarding our knowledge of what nature can do. The infant imagines it can catch hold of the moon, and reaches its small hands to grasp it; and as experience teaches the child its mistakes, so mankind widens his knowledge of nature by contact with new fields of activity.

It might be supposed that the world is agreed upon those of nature's laws which are manifested; but if we study into the subject, we shall find that some things, obvious to many, are matters of mystery, even of impossibility, to others. The man who built the first iron ship was laughed at by those who knew nothing of the laws regarding the displacement of water; but the ship floated, nevertheless. Intelligent and well educated people, not so many generations

ago, believed the world to be a flat plane. When it was first proposed to run a railway train at a speed faster than horses could gallop, people said it was impossible, merely because such things were not within the field of their experience. For centuries men were content with the most primitive methods of raising heavy weights and materials for house and bridge building. Stones were hauled up an inclined plane of heavy timbers constructed with much labor, or over a mound of sand which must be removed when the stones were in place, yet the power of a tiny stream of water in a pipe no thicker than a lead pencil would have accomplished the same purpose, but their knowledge did not include the laws of hydraulics. The great Alexander used clumsy battering rams and consumed weeks of time in making a breach in the walls of Miletus. A charge of dynamite would have effected it in five minutes, but he was unacquainted with the nature of explosives. Looking back and noticing how very undeveloped were some of the earlier races, we are apt, in comparing them with ourselves, to imagine that we have reached the bottom of nature's box and have disclosed all her treasures; but those who are wise and observant know to the contrary. All our best thinkers hold an open mind as to what may be the limits of the possible. The great Newton, when congratulated upon his achievements for the benefit of mankind, said: "I have stood upon the seashore and gathered a few shells upon the margin but the unexplored immensity of the ocean lies beyond."

So great are the strides made in knowledge of natural laws that it is now regarded as dangerous to speak of the impossible. Indeed there is a tendency to let the imagination run to the other extreme. People sometimes talk as if the flying machine were already patented. However, in our age, the optimist has the advantage; and, for my own part, I would rather be with the man who looked forward to the time when the journey from Liverpool to New York and back could be accomplished from Saturday to Monday, than with the man who scoffed at its possibility.

Some may ask, "What has all this to do with nature's laws? Everything. These fresh strides in science and engineering are merely the result of discoveries of nature's laws, and it is my belief that these will be unfolded to us in unbroken procession, without hiatus, and that the composition and form of the ultimate atom will be within the knowledge of the future scientist.

We stand at an important point in the unfoldment of the laws of nature. What have hitherto been considered bulwarks of faith are now found to be very straws of instability. The old proverb about being able to see through a closed door will no longer serve as sarcasm, for, by means of the X-rays, we *can* do that very thing.

Let us confine ourselves to one law—that of the power of motion to overcome inertia, of force to overcome gravity. When any ponderable substance is moved along or raised, we look for some physical force to account for it; but in all time nature has exhibited to us the phenomena of motion without the action of a physical power. Modern spiritualism has put on record numberless instances, and there is now an extensive literature dealing with this subject. Evidence of motion without visible power has always been available, and, at some periods in history, such evidences have become almost epidemic. A marvellous range has been covered—the moving of great weights, rendering the pliable human body impervious to sledge-hammer blows, table-rapping, the removal of disease from one body and implanting it in another. We are no longer free to question the story of the transfer of leprosy to Gehazi the Jew. Thought may be moved from the brain of one man to that of another, so that it is fast becoming patent as a law of nature that what *I* think I can make *you* think, if I understand the operation of the law well enough to set its machinery in motion. It may be said we are getting away from *tangible* things. Yet thought-transference becomes very tangible when the direct result of it is an action that may aid or save a life in a moment of supreme difficulty, or by inciting to some monstrous act, blast it completely.

This division of nature's laws we now see in the process of passing from the concealed to the manifested. The man who fails to detect the evidence of this unfoldment shuts himself out from a field of investigation most pregnant with information. It is against this willful act of exclusion and confinement of range that Theosophy raises a protesting voice. It is true that that voice has sometimes been shrill, and, in the case of one of the Founders of our society, perhaps harsh, but no one can say it has been uncalled for. What would you think of a man who, desiring to build a house and having a plentiful supply of good bricks on his ground, refused to use them, and gathered sticks from a forest fifty miles away to build in wattle and dab? Yet this is precisely the attitude of

the scientists of to-day toward the occult forces in nature.

On the surface there would seem to be a clearly marked line between the manifested laws of nature and those that are concealed, but a little closer study shows that the boundary line constantly recedes, and in time the mind reaches the conviction that there is no such boundary, but that, like the colors of the spectrum, they cross over into each other's territory, blending one into the other. This arouses the question as to what lies beyond the limit to which, for the moment, we are able to see. While this process of unfoldment is going on it is only natural that many errors should be made, for inferences will be drawn from analogy, some of which will be correct and some incorrect. In our day, when all our surroundings are so material, any phenomena which point to the fact that there are life and consciousness apart from matter will be welcomed, although there will be a risk of falling into error in regard to the character of that phenomena. People have rushed to the conclusion, because a dim form of one who has passed away has appeared that the immortality of man is proved. To be sure, it is a proof of a sort of aftermath behind the sunset of earth-life, but, of itself, it establishes nothing more. Along this line, many of our spiritist friends have fallen into difficulties, thinking that phenomena, such as table-rapping and materialization of forms, put them in possession of the final word regarding the condition after death. Theosophy claims that there is here a genuine discovery of some of the laws of nature, but that the inferences drawn therefrom are incorrect.

But, leaving this for the present, let us glance at what has been given to us by the investigations of spiritism, clairvoyance, mesmerism, hypnotism and the like. We have learned that a bodily form that is sensible to the touch can come into a room through the fibrous tissues of an oaken floor or barred door. What has been the effect of this knowledge? At one stroke it has demolished the boundaries built up, perhaps after long lives of striving for truth, as to what are the limits of the laws of nature. When such an experience comes to a mind of a scientific character, the change is marvellous. Look at Sir William Crookes, and think of the millions, perhaps, of those he will bring after him. We have learned a great secret regarding the grades of matter of which our world is composed. The astral plane of nature is gradually becoming a reality. More than this, mesmerism has made it plain to

many that there is a magnetic force or fluid in our physical bodies which can pass from one to the other without visible contact. Hypnotism has proven the same exchange in the thought realm.

Facts such as these have gradually been filtering into the minds of people, and breaking up the ground for the reception of the teachings to be found in our Theosophical literature. We cannot in any way affect to ignore the value of that portion of the breaking-up process which has come about through the investigations of the seance room. But that person is blind indeed who, having any acquaintance with the history of the subject, fails to see the sacrifices which have already been made and the dangers which are encountered by too eager a rush into contact with the concealed side of nature. The evil is manifest, and any line of thought which aims at showing how the dangers can be avoided is entitled to be heard.

No new field of the operation of nature's laws will be laid out for us, but we shall find a hitherto unknown field of consciousness in man's complex being. Heretofore we have been content to know of five senses, but in the power which we must admit is possessed by some persons who see clearly without their eyes and hear without their ears, we may behold the beginnings of a sixth sense, the ultimate perfection of which we can now only conjecture. It is no argument against the existence of this sixth sense that the majority of people do not in the faintest degree realize that it exists. You cannot argue a blind man into your vision of the stars and the rainbow. Perhaps, however, if you can win his confidence, you may speak to him of the truth hidden from his sight and help him to understand.

And there must be this same sympathy between a person able to accept the teachings concerning the concealed side of nature and those who he believes possess such knowledge. In all periods of the world's history there have been men who were acquainted with the hidden laws of nature and their operation. They knew the conditions under which water could not wet or fire burn. It may satisfy the crowd of people whose lives are immersed in the rush for mere riches and comfort to dismiss the subject with a contemptuous gesture; but this will not disturb the earnest student for whom the corner of the veil of Isis has, if only for a moment, been drawn aside.

Beyond the well known laws with which we daily deal there stretches a vast field of yet unknown laws, also daily dealt with by those whose knowledge and greater evolution have entitled them to acquaintance with and use of them. If one will give but a little study and attention to this subject, he will find himself amply repaid. Even though no great unfoldment may come, something at

least is gained by keeping an open mind, for verily, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

W. G. JOHN.

Brisbane, April, 1899.

DREAM.

"When Buddhi is absorbed in Agnyana (nescience, or activity in matter) then it is that the wise term it sleep. * * * When Buddhi is in full bloom, then it is said to be in Jagrat (waking state). * * * In this universe the mundane existence, which is an ocean of sorrow, is nothing but a long dream, the longest illusion of the mind, and the longest lived reign of fancy."—Varaha Upanishad.

THE azure dome of golden, cloudless noon
Was filled with bridal bells and scent of flowers,
As from the altar I led forth my bride
To shelter in my father's ancient hall.
My purse string, swelled by happiness, had burst
And spilled the gold in misery's sad lap,
While from my lightsome heart went out a love
That hid the vileness of her draggled robes.
"O Life," I thought, "how grand a sovereign thou
To give us moments such as this."

But hark!

From out the inmost silence of my soul
I heard a voice intone, "Thou art a dream."
I looked on my beloved lily bride—
"If dreams like this be dreaming, let me dream!"
Another June had come—another noon—
When up the aisle we passed again—we twain—
But she was borne by strong, strange hands—
A still, cold thing—nor blush nor smile—but prone
Beneath sweet flowers she last year walked upon.
And I, in desolation wrapped, was led
Behind the trailing scents; nor heard the toll
Of belfry music, nor the priestly chant—
My senses lost in one great sense of blank,
As when the lights go out in crowded hall
So black the world seemed with my heart-light gone.
Then sudden, through my grief, I heard again
The far-off voice I once had heard before—
"Thou art a dream." From agonizing depths
I cried—"If this be dream, O let me wake!"
Respondent to that prayer a veil seemed rent,
And on my vision, introspective grown,
A soft and domed light o'erspread my view,
And held me rapt in expectation's thrall.
"O Light, from Darkness springing, art *Thou* dream?"
Thus questioned I. The same clear tone, now near,
Replied—"The Light is vesture of the Lord,
And thus is also dream." "And Thou," I cried,
"Who knowest dream to be, must surely know
The waking after dream. I pray Thee tell
Hath she, who silent lies, awakened now?"
"Tis but a change of dream," the soft voice breathed.
"When changing comes for me, shall ours inblend?"
"Thou so shalt dream until that dream thread breaks."
"Oh Thou, who countest all the changing dreams,
What *art* Thou?" "As the *Voice* I, too, am dream;
But as the One Great *I*, behind The Word,
I am the Sleepless One who never dreams,
Once knowing Me, all dreams shall cease for thee."

MARY FRANCES WIGHT, F. T. S. (in *Lucifer*).

T. S. ECHOES.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE LETTER.

To All Branches of the American Section T. S.

DEAR CO-WORKERS AND FELLOW STUDENTS:

We are taught in the Wisdom Religion—and the teaching is reinforced by our daily experience—that in all manifestations of life there are periods of activity and rest; also that rest is essential to progress and not a hindrance.

The summer-time seems to be the natural period of rest, in our latitude, and many Branches find it necessary to suspend meetings wholly or in part during July and August. But we must remember that while we require rest, our life on this planet, as a whole, is our time of activity, and so we should never give up work altogether. This period of comparative inactivity can be made most fruitful of future good, if all the earnest souls in every Branch will devote the time to thinking out plans of future work and developing spiritual forces. For we must also remember that the spiritual nature, as well as the physical, requires to be fed and nourished in order to grow, and meditation on our highest ideal and aspiration towards it should be as much a part of our daily life as the taking of food for the maintenance of the body.

Among the letters received by the committee this month were two containing thoughtful and earnest reflections on the subject of devotion and the devotional element in our meetings. These called forth considerable discussion in the committee meeting, and the conclusion arrived at coincided with that expressed in the letters—that devotional meetings should be for the members of the Branch only, and not public. It seems to be the general consensus of opinion that while the devotional element should not be entirely absent from public meetings, the exercises of that character should be brief. The reading of two or three verses—no more—from some scripture, then the announcement of the subject of the evening and a request that the audience concentrate on it in silence for a few moments, in order to

harmonize the thought as much as possible, is a method which seemed to meet with general approval.

One writer gives an outline of a devotional class which has been found successful. They take for their subject some portion of the Bible—say the sermon on the Mount. The leader reads the first beatitude, and five minutes are spent in meditation on it; then the leader speaks on it for ten minutes, other members following. The meeting is closed by the reading of a verse from the Gita and a brief meditation. The writer says that at the first meeting there were only two present, but the attendance gradually increased until it included almost the entire Branch.

A devotional class may be started in any Branch where there are even two souls who feel the need and the value of it. The help that we receive from meeting together with earnest and ardent souls cannot be overestimated. While “this muddy vesture of decay doth close us in”, we need the impulse given by personal contact to keep us moving, to enable us to pursue our difficult path up towards the higher life. As we grow more and more in spiritual life, we are able to realize more and more fully the “communion of saints”, so fully and beautifully explained by Mr. Chatterji in the January MERCURY, but in the earlier stages of our growth, we need the help of personal sympathy, and we can all give it to one another.

In a letter from one of the delegates to Convention from a very young Branch occurs this passage: “Do you older members realize with what keenness of perception your words, actions and *thoughts* are being weighed by new members or delegates? The thought naturally arises in our minds—Does the true Theosophic spirit prevail in this organization, or is it, like so many others, empty and meaningless?”

These words must bring before every one of us with intense vividness the tremendous responsibilities we have assumed in joining the Theosophical Society. The ideals set before us are so high as to seem at times unattainable. But with all the helps and incentives that Theosophy gives us, we cannot be discouraged. I think we may ask the new-comers to remember that intellectual appreciation of an ideal must come long before its attainment is possible, and that the truths of Theosophy would remain the same, though every member of the Society should prove a hypocrite. An old member being asked by an outsider if he were a Theosophist, replied, “I am

a member of the Theosophical Society and I am trying to be a Theosophist," and this expresses the attitude of most of us. Several other letters were read from those who had been delegates, and all expressed a cordial appreciation of the pleasure derived from the Convention and the impression received of harmony and earnestness among those who took an active part in it.

There has been one new branch organized since the Convention, at Charlotte, Michigan.

There seems to be a very general feeling which finds expression in letters from various Branches, voiced by the lecturers with whom the Committee is now in touch, and which was dwelt upon at some length in the General Secretary's report, and that is that a systematic visitation of Branches by some one of our lecturers is essential to their growth, and even in some cases to their continued existence. We have a noble band of teachers whose names appear in the report, but what is lacking is the means to keep them in the field. If every member in the section would earnestly resolve and ardently believe that this should be done, and do his share towards it, there can be no doubt as to the result. Much has been accomplished in the past year. Let us redouble our efforts for the coming twelve months, so that, as we approach the dawn of the twentieth century, we may meet it with a strong, united front.

Yours fraternally,
THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

Chicago, August 3, 1899.

EDITOR MERCURY:

It gives me great pleasure to inform you and readers of MERCURY that the committee appointed to incorporate the American Section of the Theosophical Society and a Board of Trustees of the Theosophical Society, American Section, has completed the duties assigned to it.

This latter body is formed in compliance with the resolution passed by the last convention, which reads: "Resolved that this Convention, the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the American Section, Theosophical Society, hereby assents to and approves of the incorporation of a body of five Trustees to receive donations and legacies for the benefit of the American Section and for the sustentation of the Theosophical Cause; the Trustees to disburse the same under the conditions made to the respective gifts, and that the Convention sanctions as such Trustees and Incorporators the following persons, to wit: George E. Wright of Chicago, Robert A. Burnett of Chicago, Fawcett Plumb of Streator, Illinois, Wm. J. Walters of San Francisco, California, and Alexander Fuller-

ton of New York City. In case of death, resignation or removal for cause of any one of the Trustees aforesaid, a successor shall be temporarily appointed by the remaining Trustees until the next Annual Convention."

This board having met, elected its officers, and adopted by-laws for its government, is now ready to discharge the duties for which it was created. The officers are: George E. Wright, President; William J. Walters, Vice-President; Fawcett Plumb, attorney; Alexander Fullerton, Treasurer; Robert A. Burnett, Secretary. Any person or persons desiring to will or bequeath property of any kind or character to the American Section of the Theosophical Society can obtain blank form from the Secretary of the Board or may will or bequeath in the regular way, naming this Board of Executors for the amount intended for the furtherance of Theosophical work.

Very truly yours,

R. H. BURNETT,

Secretary Board of Trustees.

REPORTS OF BRANCHES.

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. (Yggdrasil Lodge, T. S.).—H. C. D., Secretary, writes: Mr. Chatterji has come and gone, and we have been enriched and instructed. Ten days of teaching will give us food for thought for many a day. His eloquence as a lecturer and his incomparable answering of questions drew inquirers from every class of society, and those who "came to scoff remained to pray." Mr. Chatterji delivered three public lectures in Minneapolis, with question meetings the succeeding nights, and two public lectures in St. Paul, besides private meetings with each Branch. Every moment seemed full, and we look forward to having him with us again in the fall for a longer period. New members joined and the old ones were strengthened. We were very sorry Mrs. Scott could not be present, as we looked forward to meeting her and receiving her assistance in class teaching. We are anxiously awaiting the return of Mrs. Davis, who is now in Europe attending Convention and absorbing spiritual knowledge and instruction which she will bestow on us in her usual loving way.

ST. LOUIS, MO. (St. Louis Lodge, T. S.).—This Branch was organized under great difficulties by Dr. Burnett one year ago. There were seven charter members, of whom four remain actively attached to the Society; new names were enrolled during the visit of Mrs. Scott and Dr. Burnett in March and there are now twenty-one. Several of these, however, live at such remote distances that they find it impossible to attend. For some months after organization, meetings were held in private houses, but through the generosity of Mrs. Scott the Lodge was provided with a regular meeting room in the spring, and has been enabled to meet expenses ever since, though compelled to find less costly quarters. Mrs. Scott also equipped the Lodge with an excellent library, in-

cluding the "Secret Doctrine" and all the manuals. Meetings are held every Friday evening at 716 N. Spring Avenue. Beginning in the autumn, public meetings will be held once or twice each month, and an effort will be made to present the truths of Theosophy to beginners and inquirers in simple form. The officers are: President, Miss Margaret K. Slater; Vice-President, Mrs. Florence Wyman Richardson; Secretary and Treasurer, Miss Agnes Leech; Librarian, Mrs. Emily Phelips. S.

TOPEKA, KANSAS.—Mrs. E. B. Greene, Secretary, writes: The Topeka Branch has been holding its regular Wednesday afternoon meetings despite the warm weather, and the faithful who attend feel well repaid. Several meetings since Convention have been spent in listening to our delegate's notes taken at different lectures and gatherings, and her account of pleasant acquaintances made while in Chicago. During July and August, instead of the usual lessons in "Ancient Wisdom", we have decided it will be a pleasant change to read and discuss papers sent us from the Lecture Bureau. We trust this will help to keep up interest, which is always more or less languid during the summer months. Then, when the cool weather comes, we can take up our systematic work with zest. Our Branch mourns the loss of Mrs. Flora J. Roy, who passed to higher life July 20th. She is the first of our members whom death has called, and while we shall miss her presence we know all is well. May our thoughts be such as will help her onward in her journey.

CHICAGO, ILL.—Chicago T. S. sends a farewell greeting to MERCURY, with thanks for the courtesy always extended by the editorial staff. We shall miss our official organ in many ways and especially in its intimate relations with the various Branches. Doubtless another channel will be found to keep the Branches in touch with each other, but nevertheless there will remain a tender regard and memory for the faithful little friend that came to us each month with a message. Many thanks do we send to the faithful workers who have made the official organ a possibility. Chicago T. S. has adjourned its regular meetings during July and August and will re-assemble the first Wednesday in September. An informal class meeting, however, is held each Wednesday evening. Mr. Randall is in charge of it, and the meetings have so far been very well attended. Headquarters are open as usual and members drop in from time to time, but Branch activities are generally suspended during the summer, many of the members being out of town. However, autumn will soon be here and we shall open the season refreshed in mind and body, ready and willing for the work at hand. P. G. K.

LOS ANGELES, CAL. (Harmony Lodge, T. S.).—C. D. G., Secretary, writes: Since last report, the following lectures have been delivered: "Theosophy and Its Mission," "Our Relation to Children," "Man—His Nature and Powers", and "The Occult Side of Daily Habits." We have had a visit from Miss Dashiell of San Francisco, and were favored with an interesting lecture entitled "The Duality of the Cosmos." A very successful social gathering on the 6th of July was much enjoyed, and thanks are due to the committees who did so much toward preparing and carrying out the affair.

CHICAGO, ILL.—H. A. H. writes: Theosophical activities in Chicago are by no means at their lowest ebb. While it is true that a number of our prominent members are taking summer vacations, it is likewise true that some of the most telling work of the year is now going on. At Headquarters, Mr. Randall conducts a class every Wednesday evening, in the study of the Rounds and Races. At the Shila Branch, meetings are held regularly every Saturday evening under the tutorship of Mrs. A. J. Darling and "our" Miss Walsh. At 6115 Woodlawn Avenue, the Eastern Psychology Branch meets regularly every Thursday evening, and at 6558 Stewart Avenue the Englewood White Lodge study-class holds forth. Through the united efforts of the members of the different Branches in Chicago a most commodious and elegantly equipped hall has been engaged at 420-22 West 93rd Street, wherein three public lectures by Miss M. A. Walsh have already been given to good audiences of interested listeners. It is a most pleasing and noteworthy fact that the sense of separateness is conspicuously absent in the work that the promoters of this lecture course (who are, bear in mind, members of different Branches of the T. S.) are doing. I am glad, too, to be able to truthfully say that we have been largely assisted in our work in more ways than one by persons who are as yet non-members. Our Lotus class, instituted some time since, after having reached a membership of twenty-one children, has been adjourned *sine die*.

NEW ZEALAND SECTION.—Miss Edger has been doing good work in Dunedin and Christchurch, and is now in Wellington. Her stay in these places has been somewhat longer than was anticipated. Mrs. Draffin's suburban lectures in Auckland have drawn good audiences. Beginning on June 18th, her subject was "The Teachings of Theosophy"; June 25th, "One or More Earth Lives—Which?"; July 2nd, "The Growth of the Soul." The concluding lecture of the series on July 9th, was on "The Masters of Wisdom." The success of these lectures in Ponsonby and the usefulness of the drawing-room meetings at Ponsonby College show that there is a good deal of interest in Theosophy in this part of the city, and in all probability meetings will be held regularly. In the near future we hope to start lecturing in the other suburbs of Auckland. In Wellington, Mrs. Richmond has been lecturing on "The Power of Thought in Man", and "Caste and Class in the East and West", the latter evoking a very interesting discussion. Mr. W. S. Short has also lectured during the month on "The Authority on Which Theosophy Rests" and "The Atonement." On July 9th, Mr. S. Stuart gave an able lecture in Auckland on "The Invisible World." At the larger Branches there is continuous, steady activity in the various classes, and it is this quiet, persistent work that tells. The smaller Branches keep on in their way, and though the Secretaries report difficulties, there is always sufficient life and interest left to keep them going.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.—Golden Gate Lodge, since last report, has received three new members, and lost one by death. Lectures have been delivered as follows: "Mysteries of Sound and Music" (the second, by special request), by Dr. Marques; "Thought Forms," by a symposium; "Dreams," by Mrs. Alice

M. Best; "Steps in Magic," by W. C. Bailey. Mr. J. C. Chatterji arrived on August 9th, and at our Branch meeting of that date, gave a talk to those in attendance. Since then, he has been holding classes almost daily, and these have attracted many earnest inquirers. On Sunday morning, by request, Mr. Chatterji conducted a class in the study of the Bhagavad Gita, and in the evening spoke to a large audience on "The Mysteries of the Beyond." At the Branch meeting of August 16th, he again attended, and gave a most helpful talk to the members upon the subject of "The Presence of the Divine in All Things." Unfortunately, our good friend, Dr. Marques, was called away to his home on short notice. We had hoped to keep him with us for some months; but, while deprived of his presence and assistance, we have, on the other hand, been encouraged and strengthened in our work by the cheering reports which our President has brought with him on his return from Europe. The Lotus Circle has reopened with a good attendance of bright young people. Over thirty volumes have been added to our lending library.

CONVENTION OF THE DUTCH SECTION.

A large reception was held on the evening of the fifteenth of July at the Holland Headquarters at Amsterdam. A festive air was lent the occasion by the illumination of the garden. Many guests were in attendance. Two formal sessions of the Convention proper were held on Sunday, the sixteenth, at which a large and representative gathering attended, many out-of-town members being present. To show the prevailing spirit, when it was indicated to the body that the growing needs of the Section really required new quarters that could be used for library, office of General Secretary, etc., four hundred dollars were subscribed on the spot. Steps were also taken to revise the rules, so as to obtain recognition from the Government and legal status as a Section. We who have enjoyed the great privilege and advantage of Theosophic teaching in our native tongue can hardly estimate the difficulties of those of our brothers who have first to learn English and then translate and print the literature for the country in which they have to work. Only the spirit of sincere devotion can carry forward the work thus required. In Holland, they have now begun the translation of the "Secret Doctrine", which work has become possible through the devoted service of Johan Van Manen. This young gentleman, though but twenty years of age, is editing the Section's magazine—a most presentable monthly—translating the "Secret Doctrine", and making a special study of Chinese literature with a view to later translations. Mr. Fricke, the General Secretary of Holland, is another earnest student, and his genial kindness to all is one of the binding links in the work of the Section. Mr. Fricke gave a most interesting lecture at the evening session of the Convention.

BOOK REVIEWS.

"Evolution of Life and Form," by Annie Besant. Price (cloth), 75 cents.

Mrs. Besant's latest contribution to Theosophic literature consists of a series of four lectures delivered at the Adyar Convention in November, 1898. The first is entitled "Ancient and Modern Science." It shows how, in olden times, religion and science walked side by side, religion revealing the Spirit, science studying into the various aspects of the Spirit in manifestation. In other words, the world was studied from the standpoint of the evolving life, working from above downwards. In our time, science studies the forms, hoping, by a process of induction, to discover what underlies them. By means of much labor and patience, most delicate and accurate instruments have been perfected, to assist the scientist in pursuing his investigations. According to the older method, man learned to know Life by studying and evolving the life within himself, by a process of unfoldment, by bringing into activity his own divine powers. For what is life, or consciousness? The power to answer to vibrations. And evolution is the unfolding of an ever-increasing power to respond. "There is but One Life, the Life of God, within everything in His universe." All are His Life, His consciousness, His thought. "Inasmuch as we are in His image, we can answer to the vibrations of His thinking and can reproduce in our minds that which He has initiated in order that we may be evolved."

"The Functions of the Gods" treats of the Devas, those hosts of Intelligences which stand between man and the Supreme in the work of evolution. They are, in fact, the guides of evolution, carrying out the will of the Supreme by bringing about proper conditions. The lower kingdoms obey the law, for they are without will. In the human family discord arises, and it will not cease until the separated wills, by choice, unite in obedience to God, and then the purpose of human evolution will have been accomplished. Meantime, a balancing power is needed to prevent men travelling beyond the lines laid out for them. To avert such confusion is one of the functions of the Gods. They are the builders of form, and the destroyers likewise. Sometimes they become the guides and teachers of the more advanced human Egos. They guide the karma of nations, and also the working of the law in individual cases. Each man is related by the constitution of his bodies to one or another of the Gods. "In every stage of your life, Gods are around you. No karma that you make, that they will not remember; no appeal that you utter, that they will not answer."

The third lecture deals with the evolution of Life. "The universe is but the seed of the Deity, with every power involved within it, and capable by its evolution of becoming the image of the Supreme." The downward arc is first

treated—the involving process—the veiling of the Life in sheath after sheath, in order that these sheaths may be evolved as vehicles for the Self. The earliest actions of Deity in evolving a world-system are in the generation of certain types, or archetypes, and these, subdividing and multiplying, give birth to the universe of form. The world of Idea, coming forth from the Supreme, draws to itself forms of the subtlest matter, and these become the model, as it were, for those later forms which are to be worked out during the cycle of evolution. The life-wave descending, under the impulse of the Supreme, takes on grosser and grosser matter, more and more separated forms, until the lowest point, the mineral kingdom, is reached, and here we find life and consciousness most limited and confined. Then the life begins its upward journey, stimulated into activity from without. “We can sum up the whole of the working of the life as the receiving of vibrations from matter without and the answering of vibrations from itself within.” The seed of life in the rock very slowly and gradually extends and grows, breaking down the rigid wall of matter which confines it, and thereby developing within itself the power of greater response to impulses from without, until it reaches a stage of plasticity capable of expression in a higher kingdom of nature. The life creeps forward into the lowest form of vegetable, and passes gradually onward until it develops the power of responding to a new series of vibrations—those of feeling, sensation, the distinguishing characteristic of the animal. Then the life builds the vehicle in which man is to dwell. This ready, there comes down the third outpouring from the Logos, and the awakening of intelligence. When the center of consciousness is shifted from the animal to the human kingdom, there is a complete change in the method of development. The life is stimulated from within, by mental images, by memory, as well as from without. Separation springs up, conflict arises, the center growing stronger by struggle. This is where mankind stands to-day—in the midst of the development of the intelligent aspect of the Self. Beyond are higher possibilities, wherein separation gives place to union, intelligence joins hands with Love, the unit man becomes Humanity. This is the Christ-stage, and those who have already attained it have been recognized as the Saviors of the world. The final goal is reached when the Son becomes one with the Father, when the Christos merges into the Supreme, when union gives place to Unity, when the perfected man “becomes one with the Deity Himself, in full power of eternal Self-Being.”

“Evolution of Form” deals with the phenomenal aspect of the universe. Mrs. Besant points out the two impelling forces—the one the Universal Life working as a unit, the other that portion of Life individualized and working in man. These work along parallel lines. In the earlier stages, the evolutionary impulse comes directly from Ishwara, but, as He moulds the outer form, he strengthens the inner center, which, in eons of time, requiring marvellous patience, is to become a self-sustaining image of Himself. As the center grows stronger and its activity increases, it begins to send out vibrations of its own, and from that point on, there is the double action. Gradually the evolving center gains more and more control of the form; and as this power of control increases, the directive energy of Ishwara is gradually withdrawn,

the center working independently, in a sense, though of course still drawing its Life from the greater Center. The evolution of form proceeds in a circle; on the downward arc, Ishwara imparts qualities; on the upward arc he builds these into vehicles. The building of organs follows the exercise of life-functions; the outer form responds to the inner impulse. That which is true of the physical form is also true of the invisible bodies. Coming to the human kingdom, man builds, in addition to the sheaths which he has in common with the animal, a higher vehicle, the result of his thought. "Thinking is the work of the mind itself on the mental images supplied through sensation." Independent thinking—not mere reflection of the thoughts of others—must be practiced. The mind must have food as well as the body. The faculties of the mind need exercise as much as do the muscles of the body. Thus the independent center comes step by step to co-operate with the Divine in the upbuilding of form. The senses must be held in check, the mind controlled, before the man is ready for the life of Yoga and the vivification of the inner sheaths which will bring him in touch with subtler planes of the universe. When the man is ready, he finds his Guru waiting for him.

MAGAZINES.

The Theosophical Review, London, (July).—The "Watch-Tower" is filled with interesting comments, and, among other things, notes the translation of "The Secret Doctrine" into Dutch. It has already appeared in Spanish, Swedish and French. This latest rendering is being issued in parts, and is said by those who know to be an excellent translation. Mr. Mead concludes his essay on "Trismegistic Literature." "Comprehensiveness", by Colonel R. Elias, sets forth the necessity for toleration among men and nations. "As we are at the present day in a position to take, compared with former times, a view so much more accurate and comprehensive of the whole world, of the nations with their hitherto accumulated history, knowledge and experience, it must follow that our ideas and opinions, even concerning matters transcending exact knowledge, will expand and become more and more comprehensive. It is a like a stone dropped into the water, producing a series of ever-widening circles. So in time—but not in a short time—we may hope to reach an infinitely wide circle of harmony and comprehensiveness." William C. Ward contributes an article on "The Philosophy of Plotinus", and the translation of the first section of "The Yoga Vasishta" is concluded. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley's "The Heavenly Kingdom of the Holy Grail" gives the "History of Titurel", the founder of the dynasty of the Grail-Kings. He was the embodiment of noble, pure, true manhood, and among other "powers" which he had attained was that of "length of days." He was commanded to build a Temple for the reception of the Holy Grail, and this task he completed when he was four hundred years old. By daily contemplation of the Grail, his life was prolonged for five hundred years, and at the approach of death he gathered his children about him and instructed them upon the spiritual significance of the Holy Grail, teaching them that only the pure and holy, who are free from

strife, may see the Grail. Bertram Keightley writes upon "The Gita as a Text-book of Devotion." "The Christ" is from the pen of Mrs. Besant. Having pointed out that comparative mythology has contributed not a little toward the levelling of the barriers which formerly divided the Christian from his "heathen" brethren; and that there are now two schools of thought which stand in direct opposition to each other in their conceptions of the Teacher of Galilee, one assigning the whole story to myth and legend, the other maintaining that it is exact history; she states that the "thought of the Christ which has been the support and inspiration of millions of noble lives in East and West", though called by other names, is in danger of being lost. What is needed to avert this danger is to study the Christ in all his aspects, historical, mythic, mystic. Then follows a study of the historical Christ as observed by the occultist, from which study is deduced the fact that the Christ was a "glorious Being belonging to the great spiritual hierarchy that guides the spiritual evolution of humanity, who used for some three years the human body of the disciple Jesus." "Understudies" is a brief but well-written article by Louis L. Playford, which treats of the growing need for more "instructors" in Theosophical teaching—students who shall *give* as well as receive. "The Reaper", by E. E. Green, puts forth the teaching of Karma in a good short story. "Activities" and "Reviews" complete this number.

The Vahan, London (July).—C. W. L. replies to a question relative to the period between incarnations, and cites the case of one individual, who, out of sixteen successive life-periods, with an earth-life averaging 48 years, lived an average interval out of incarnation of 1265 years. He further says that H. P. B.'s average of 1800 years probably applies to those egos who belong to the first-class pitris, and not to less developed entities. G. R. S. M. says, in reply to a query as to the Gnostic teaching, that it was identical with Theosophy in holding that the Divine exists in all forms of life, but only becomes *manifest* in the human kingdom, and then only when the Divine has gained control of the human. A. A. W. and B. K. reply to two companion questions regarding the destruction of life and the enormous prodigality of Nature in providing for the perpetuation of the species. B. K. reiterates the teaching of Theosophy that it is the *Life*, not the *form*, which evolves. As Life evolves, it finds expression in an appropriate form, but the destruction of the form frees the Life and enables it to pass to a higher condition. A. A. W. calls attention to the fact that there are other processes of evolution going on upon this earth besides the one to which we belong. In the line of our own evolution are also included the three elemental, the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, all of which are dependent upon *man* for their progress. By our thoughts and desires we assist the development of the elemental kingdoms, and whether these be good or bad from *our* standpoint, they are forces which Nature utilizes for the advancement of some aspect of Life. So, in the physical realm, every action creates new changes, new combinations, new forms. When we reach the human kingdom, many new considerations enter in, for we have to deal with entities whose real life is upon another plane, but who find it needful

to dwell in physical bodies for comparatively brief periods. When a human form is prepared and left untenanted, it is not that the ego has "lost an opportunity" but simply that it refuses to occupy the tenement because it is not suitable. This occurs with old races, where the advancing egos decline to incarnate in bodies inefficient for their uses, and we say the race is "dying out." Also, in so-called "high" families, the members of which "have deliberately set themselves to make their offspring such as no human ego, even the very lowest, could possibly live in." A question as to whether it is ever justifiable to use hypnotic suggestion for the cure of drunkenness and the like is ably dealt with by G. R. S. M., who gives it as his opinion that it would depend upon whether the help were *asked*. He cites the fact that a Master never *forces* his aid on the unwilling. Where aid is called for it may be given; but the channel through which it comes should be pure and clean, lest in endeavoring to drive out one evil, something worse be "suggested" in its stead. Better it were if this man were strong enough to stand upon his own feet and fight the battle, but if we find him on the ground struggling in the grasp of the demon he has permitted to overpower him and calling to us for help, it is our duty to listen and do what we can to assist him. S. M. S. replies to a query as to the length of the period of "blankness" which overtakes the disciple who has succeeded in breaking away from the life of sensation, and points out the fact that the trials we have now to overcome are as shadows compared to those we must meet farther on in life's journey, and each conflict won fits us for the fiercer battles yet to be fought.

Mind (July), contains many timely articles relating to liberal and advanced thought. "Experimental and Transcendental Psychology", by Quæstor Vitæ, discusses the various states of consciousness and recent results of hypnotic and mesmeric experiments. "The Esoteric Art of Living", by Joseph Steuart, is worthy of copious quotations, for it contains many philosophical thoughts. Students of Theosophy will find stimulating ideas in "The Spiritual Utility of Physical Correspondence", by Henry Wood, and "The Value of Understanding", by Horatio W. Dresser. S.K. Davis in "Higher Laws" says: "The divine laws become the sponsors of every good man; but the very dust conspires to trip a rogue and every sparrow mocks him." T. E. Kras, in his paper on "Gathering up the Fragments", tersely shows how nature is the great utilitarian, and that rest is not found in cessation but in the variation of activity. In reference to unutilized mental force and concentration, he says: "Talk of Niagara's unutilized force! It is simply insignificant compared with the power in reserve in the one-pointed action of a single mind." The crusade against metaphysical healing under the heading of "The Medical Trust", is unbiasedly reviewed in the "Editorial Department."

The Prasnottara, Benares (June), continues the "Building of the Individual" having reached in this article the vegetable kingdom. The fourth conversation traces the working of the Third Logos or the Holy Spirit. Questions and answers, besides a brief review, and general Theosophical activities in India, complete the gazette.

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